MPS

Community Education

YOUTH & ADULT PROGRAMS

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Minneapolis Community Education Presents

RENT

Book, Music and Lyrics by
Jonathan Larson

Musical Arrangements
Steve Skinner

Original Concept/Additional Lyrics
Billy Aronson

Music Supervision & Additional Arrangements
Tim Weil

Dramaturg
Lynn Thomson

RENT was originally produced in New York by New York Theatre Workshop and on Broadway by Jeffrey Seller, Kevin McCollum, Allan S. Gordon and New York Theatre Workshop

Producers
JoEllyn Jolstad & Dave Premack

Director
Natalie Dulka

Music Director
Sara Sawyer

Choreographer
Michelle de Joya

Production Manager
Emily Selchow

Stage Manager
Elizabeth Koetz

Pit Conductor
Meghan Eliason

Technical Director
Matt Koppe

Costume Design
Aella Rose-Hill

Lighting Design
Mary Southern

Props Master
Marlow Johnston

PRODUCER'S NOTES

In 2018, we had the crazy idea to start a citywide Summer Community Theatre program through Minneapolis Community Education. We set out to provide a pre-professional experience for young people who are interested in or are currently studying for careers in theatre arts. We brought together students entering grades 11th/12th and college with experienced adult actors, musicians and technicians of all ages. We also wanted to give space for our artists to experience new roles in theatre, on and off stage, and are especially proud to have a remarkable number of MPS alumni on our production teams in leadership roles again this year. This production is two years in the making, and with our amazing creative team and talented company, we are so excited to share *RENT!* with you. This year's show is all about building a community. With each show we meet new talent and deepen our relationships with those who have been with us year after year. (Don't miss a visual history of our past productions in the lobby). It is our biggest honor to continue to spread the performing arts throughout our community through these annual productions. Enjoy the show! *~JoEllyn Jolstad & Dave Premack*

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Act I

Tune Up A.....Mark, Roger
Voice Mail #1.....Mark's Mother
Tune Up B.....Mark, Roger, Collins, Benny
Rent.....Company
Christmas Bells #1.....Homeless Man
You Okay, Honey?.....Angel, Collins
Tune Up – Reprise.....Mark, Roger
One Song Glory.....Roger
Light My Candle.....Mimi, Roger
Voice Mail #2.....Mr. Jefferson, Mrs. Jefferson
Today For You.....Collins, Mark, Roger, Angel
You'll See.....Benny, Mark, Roger, Collins, Angel
Tango Maureen.....Mark, Joanne
Support Group.....Company
Out Tonight.....Mimi
Another Day.....Mimi, Roger, Company
Will I.....Company
On The Street.....Company
Santa Fe.....Collins, Angel, Mark
I'll Cover You.....Angel, Collins
We're Okay.....Joanne
Christmas Bells.....Company
Over The Moon.....Maureen
La Vie Boheme / I Should Tell You.....Company

Act II

Seasons of Love.....Company
Happy New Year A.....Roger, Mark, Mimi, Collins, Angel, Maureen, Joanne
Happy New Year B.....Roger, Mark, Mimi, Collins, Angel, Maureen, Joanne, Benny
Take Me or Leave Me.....Maureen, Joanne
Seasons of Love B.....Company
Without You.....Roger, Mimi
Contact.....Company
I'll Cover You – Reprise.....Collins, Company
Halloween.....Mark
Goodbye Love.....Mark, Roger, Mimi, Collins, Maureen, Joanne, Benny
What You Own.....Roger, Mark
Finale A.....Company
Your Eyes.....Roger
Finale B.....Company

Any video and/or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.
Run time is approximately 2 hours 45 minutes with a 15-minute intermission.

CAST

Mark Cohen.....MICHAEL CAREY
Roger Davis.....ISAIAH DIETZ
Benjamin Coffin III.....PILAR INGRAM
Joanne Jefferson.....CATHERINE HASTINGS
Tom Collins.....ABDOULIE CEESAY
Angel Schunard.....ELMY GRANDE
Mimi Marquez.....BIMEI FLORES
Maureen Johnson.....BRITTANY SQUILLACE
Support Group/Mr Grey/Pastor.....JACOB DEVINE
Support Group.....ACE CARL
Support Group/Vendor.....LOGAN SCHUMACHER
Support Group/Coat Vendor.....SYDNEY SUMMERS
Support Group.....GRACE TATLEY
Support Group.....MILES SCROGGINS
Blanket Person.....VAL SULLIVAN
Homeless Man/The Man.....JAD STANFIELD
Squeegee/Restaurant Man.....MERLYN POWERS
Support Group/Seasons of Love Soloist.....ROSEMARY VEGA
Mrs Cohen.....LORI MILBRANDT
Roger's Mom/Homeless Person.....HEATHER RIECK
Mr Jefferson.....AARON LIEBO
Mrs Jefferson.....NAOMI HORNSTEIN
Mimi's Mom.....BRI SALHUS
Alexi Darling.....SHELBY MEILKE

Ensemble
CLAIRE CONNOLLY, KYLE DUESLER, CHELSEA FINKEN,
RYAN FAUGLID, MIGUEL GONZALEZ, SAWYER HUSS, JACKIE KOPPE,
VIENNA LARCHE, VIC NELSON, MOUNY OULD ALI, BEN PREMACK,
PAUL PORTER, TYSON STOCK, BLAKE WIESLER

Understudies
Claire Connolly (u/s Maureen Johnson), Kyle Duesler (u/s Benjamin Coffin),
Chelsea Finken (u/s Angel Schunard), Sawyer Huss (u/s Roger Davis),
Jad Stanfield (u/s Tom Collins), Val Sullivan (u/s Joann Jefferson),
Rosemary Vega (u/s Mimi Marquez), Blake Wiesler (u/s Mark Cohen)

Music Assistant & Swing
GABRIELLE JOHNSON

Dance Captain & Swing
MOUNY OULD ALI

Directing Assistant
ZOLA RANUM

Pit Orchestra
CONDUCTOR, KEYBOARD 1.....Meghan Eliason
KEYBOARD 2.....Sam Vinitsky
KEYBOARD 2.....Martha Mathewson
GUITAR 1.....Ian Robinson
GUITAR 2.....Alec Eichinger
BASS GUITAR.....Chris Michaels
DRUMMER.....Sean Raeside
REHEARSAL PIANIST.....Meghan Eliason, Sara Sawyer, Blake Weisler

WHO'S WHO IN THE TEAM

NATALIE DULKA (*Director*) is honored to be at the helm of this incredibly poignant and relevant production. An alum of Southwest High School, Natalie received their BFA in theatre from NDSU in 2019 and has been directing and acting around the metro ever since. Outside of the theatre, Natalie is a professional church vocalist, pet sitter and software development project manager. The hustle, as they say, never stops. To keep up with Natalie's various projects and passions, follow them on Instagram @nataliedulka or check out the website they pay $24/month for: nataliedulka.com. They couldn't be more thankful for all the work, love, and passion the cast, crew, and creative team put into this production.

SARA SAWYER (*Music Director*) is in her sixth summer musical with MCE! Sara is the youth programs music director with *MN Opera*. Recent music directing credits include *Frozen Jr., Hairspray, Newsies, BeetleJuice,* and others with MCE, Children's Theater Company and Curtain Up Theater Camp. Sara has her own private voice and piano studio. Sara is also a performer. Recent credits as a singer/actor include *Nooma*, an opera for babies, *Edgar and The Elixir of Love* with MN Opera and a cabaret series called *Musical Mondays* at Lush Night club. Before moving back to MN in 2015, she sang and taught in New York City for ten years where she performed with regional theaters around the East Coast.

MICHELLE DE JOYA (*Dance/Intimacy/Fight Choreographer*) is a Twin Cities based multidisciplinary theatre artist known for her recent acting roles in *Two Gents* (TTT), *RENT* (Artistry), *The Kung Fu Zombies SAGA* (Mu) and for receiving the '25-'26 Jerome Fellowship at the Playwrights Center. They Directed *Einstein's Brains* at Westwood Middle School, assistant directed *50 Boxes of Earth* with Theater Mu, movement directed *The Wolves* at Perpich Center, and choreographed *Moana Jr., Aladdin Jr., Hairspray* and the upcoming *Beetlejuice* Jr., with MCE. Her certifications include Unarmed Stage Combat (SAFD Recommended), and Levels 1 & 2 of "Foundations of Intimacy" with IDC (Intimacy Directors and Coordinators). If you want to learn more about their upcoming projects, visit facebook.com/dejoya. michelle

JOELLYN JOLSTAD (*Producer*) is a Program Engagement Coordinator for Minneapolis Community Education. She has a bachelors' degree from the University of Minnesota in Applied Design and Visual Communications and has been a Costume Designer and Director for 25+ years. She spent 15 years as the Coordinator of Youth and Adult Programs at Justice Page Middle School where she founded a musical theatre program, producing three shows a year. In her role with MCE she enjoys helping school year and summer sites develop performing arts programs.

DAVE PREMACK (*Producer*) has been involved in theatre since childhood when he staged a production of *Grease* in his parents' living room. He holds a B.A. in Theatre from the University of Minnesota, Duluth and has worked throughout Minnesota, New York City and the East Coast. He serves as artist-in-residence at Southwest High School and loves mentoring the next generation of tech students at his alma mater. He took over the Southwest Community Education program as Coordinator in 2016, loves how Netflix knows his likes and his dislikes, and is a wedding DJ. He apologizes to his cats for recently missing nap time.

EMILY SELCHOW (*Production Manager*) is thrilled to be back for her fifth production with MCE. Her past shows include *Hairspray*! (Production Manager, *Legally Blonde* (ASM), *Little Mermaid* (Production Manager), and *Bring It On* (Stage Manager). She is a proud MPS and theater alumni. Emily is a sparkling water enthusiast!

ELIZABETH KOETZ (*Stage Manager*) is gladly returning to the MCE community after stage managing *Hairspray* last year. Additional roles with MCE include *The Little Mermaid* (Adella) and *Legally Blonde* (Ensemble). Previous stage management credits include *The Wizard of Oz, Urinetown, and Newsies* with Twin Cities Theater Camp. She has a degree in Chemistry and Theater from Cornell College. She takes any opportunity to be musical or theatrical outside her day job playing with chemicals and is in awe of all of the cast and crew for their hard work, dedication and talent! Many thanks to her loved ones for their support!

MARY SOUTHERN (*Lighting Design*) is returning to the stage after completing a PhD in computer science. Their past work includes *F***ed Up Xmas Special*, Cirque de Lune's *Alice in Wonderland* and Life-Sized Meme's production of Year of *Bad Men*. When not doing research or theatre you can find them on four wheels skating with MN Roller Derby.

AELLA ROSE-HILL (*Costume Designer*) has worked on MCE productions on and off for years, most notably as the costume designer for *The Addams Family* and *Hairspray*. They've worked at Southwest High School as a designer and costume shop manager since 2022. Aella is also a company member with Threshold Theater, a theater based in the Twin Cities that produces exciting new works by LGBTQ+ playwrights. Design credits include *Spellbound, Shrek, More 4play,* and the upcoming *Service Industry*. They're looking forward to spending the rest of their summer rollerblading.

MATT KOPPE (*Technical Director*) is working his third MCE show, his first as Tech Director. He previously worked *The Little Mermaid* (Run crew) and *Hairspray* (Set construction). In real life, he works as a System Administrator for the nonprofit, Fraser. He walks through life with an outlook of: "Just because it's a bad idea, doesn't mean it won't be a good time!"

MARLOW JOHNSTON (*Props Master*) has been involved in many MPS and MCE shows and they are excited to do props for *RENT*. Notable past shows include *Drop Dead!* (Director), *Shrek* (Stage Manager) and *Pippin* (ASM). They will be attending Pace University in NYC to study stage management come fall!

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

Abdoulie Ceesay

Michael Carey

Ace Carl

Claire Connolly

Jacob Devine

Isaiah Dietz

Kyle Duesler

Ryan Fauglid

Chelsea Finken

Bimei Flores

Miguel Gonzalez

Elmy Grande

Catherine Hastings

Naomi Hornstein

Sawyer Huss

Pilar Ingram

Jackie Koppe

Vienna Larche

Aaron Liebo

Shelby Meilke

Lori Milbrandt

Victor Nelson

Mouny Ould Ali

Paul Porter

Merlyn Powers

Ben Premack

Heather Rieck

Bri Salhus

Logan Schumacher

Miles Scroggins

Brittany Squillace

Jad Stanfield

Tyson Stock

Val Sullivan

Sydney Summers

Grace Tatley

Rosemary Vega

Blake Wiesler

PAST MCE SHOWS

2025.....*Hairspray*
2024.....*The Little Mermaid*
2023.....*Bring It On*
2022.....*Legally Blonde*
2021.....*Matilda*
2020.....*Songs of Resistance & Resolve*
2019.....*Addams Family*

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

MICHAEL CAREY (*Mark Cohen*) is grateful for this beautiful score and amazing cast. He spent his childhood with a camera, forcing neighbors into his films, so Mark feels familiar. Past shows include *She Loves Me*! (Georg), *Grease* (Doody) and *Newsies* (Jack). When not on stage, you'll find him being melancholy in nature, perhaps while hiking, climbing or kayaking.

ABDOULIE CEESAY (*Tom Collins*) a returning actor of MCE with his last show being *Little Mermaid*. His most recent shows have been, *King John* and *Romeo and Juliet* with TAT, and *How to Catch Creation* with TRP. Off-stage Abdoulie is usually either watching *One Piece,* playing pool or playing Magic with the homies.

ACE CARL (*Support Group*) is excited to be part of this production of *RENT*. They would like to thank the cast, crew and production team for making this such a memorable experience.

CLAIRE CONNOLLY (*Ensemble, u/s Maureen Johnson*) is excited to be a part of her first MCE production! Claire is a proud MPS teacher, yoga instructor and UMN alum. She would like to thank everyone who encouraged her to audition and get her theatre spark back.

JACOB DEVINE (*Paul*) is thrilled to be performing in *RENT*. They are grateful to everyone who made this production possible and hope you enjoy the show!

ISAIAH DIETZ (*Roger Davis)*, a local actor/songwriter, is thrilled to take on another dream role! Last summer, he was Judas in SOAR's JCS, and can't wait to see what's next (please release the rights, *Hadestown*). He is grateful for the endless support from friends/family--special shout out to Emily, and the Z's.

KYLE DUESLER (*Ensemble, u/s Benny*) is excited to be participating in his first production with MCE. When he isn't on stage or rehearsing, you can find him swimming, strumming his guitar or cursing the turkeys eating the produce in his garden.

RYAN FAUGLID (*Ensemble*) is excited to be in his first MCE production. Lover of *RENT*, queer liberation and living your truth. Hater of paying rent.

CHELSEA FINKEN *(Ensemble, u/s Angel Schunard*) is so excited to be in her first production with MCE. She is incredibly grateful to everyone involved in putting this show together! She'd like to thank her wife Wren and their two cats, Buddy and Darwin, for all of their support.

BIMEI FLORES (*Mimi Marquez)* is happy to be joining the cast of RENT. They would like to thank their friends and family for all of their encouragement and support.

MIGUEL GONZALEZ (*Ensemble*) is excited for his first production with MCE. When he isn't practicing jazz and salsa steps or traveling the world, he can usually be found singing karaoke with his partner Kyle. He thanks the wonderful cast, crew and his family for their incredible support.

ELMY GRANDE (*Angel Schunard*) is excited to perform in *RENT* after appeaing in MCE's *Bring It On*. They would like to thank everyone who has supported them through this journey.

CATHERINE HASTINGS (*Joanne Jefferson*) is happy to return to the stage with MCE. They are thankful for this wonderful cast, crew and creative team.

NAOMI HORNSTEIN (*Mrs Jefferson*) is excited for her second MCE production! Her skills include an encyclopedic knowledge of/soul connection to the play, *RENT*, and dancing on scaffolding she guesses. She would like to thank all of her supporters and especially her cousins for being cliquey with her at family gatherings and literally flying in from New York City to see this play.

SAWYER HUSS (*Ensemble, u/s Roger Davis)* is excited to be making memories with this incredible company. "Thank you for supporting community theater and enjoy the show!"

PILAR INGRAM (*Benjamin Coffin III)* is back! She began her theatre journey last year in *Hairspray*! (Dynamite) followed by *Dracula* (Dracula's Wife) and she couldn't be happier to find her home on stage. She'd like to dedicate this show to her incredible mother, Cassandra and darling grandmother, Elizabeth.

JACKIE KOPPE (*Ensemble, u/s Mrs. Jefferson)* is an old hand at MCE productions: *Hairspray* (u/s Matron), *The Little Mermaid* (u/s Grimsby), *Legally Blonde* and T*he Addams Family.* She thanks family and friends for their support. Jackie believes it's more important than ever to support artists and musicians. "Viva la vie bohème!"

VIENNA LARCHE (*Ensemble*) is stoked to be in *RENT*! You may have seen her in past MCE shows like *Hairspray* (Penny) and *Legally Blonde* (Kyle). She implores you to go watch Sheep Detectives.

AARON LIEBO *(Mr. Jefferson*) is excited to be a part of his second MCE production. After playing Wilbur in last summer's *Hairspray*, he cannot believe he gets to be in *RENT*, his absolute GOAT. Aaron would like to thank Heather, Cece and Beckett for being his greatest supporters and fans.

SHELBY MEIKE (*Alexi Darling)* is grateful for the opportunity to be part of this production. They hope you enjoy watching *RENT* as much as they've enjoyed bringing it to life.

LORI MILBRANDT *(Mrs. Cohen*) is excited to be back for her second production with MCE. She is incredibly grateful for everyone associated with putting on this show. She'd like to thank her husband for eating endless amounts of Hormel Chili while she is rehearsing and not complaining about it.

VICTOR NELSON (*Ensemble*) is thrilled to be part of this production and appreciates everyone who helped make it possible. "Enjoy the performance!"

MOUNY OULD ALI (*Dance captain & Ensemble*) has been a part of MCE for two years; first

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

starring as a nicest kid & ensemble in *Hairspray*, to dance captain & ensemble in *RENT*! She is very excited to partake in more theatrical productions in the future! They would like to continue being active in community-centered projects. She enjoys being in the sunshine, daily brain games, playing Stardew Valley, fighting for the rights of all humans and living in Minneapolis.

PAUL PORTER (*Ensemble*) is proud father of four. He is a retired MPS Math Teacher and Coach. MCE shows: *Matilda* (elec. bass), *Bring It On* (elec. guitar), *Hairspray* (Ensemble). Paul is in a sweet & funky band called The Tender Souls.

MERLYN POWERS (*Squeegee/Restaurant Man*) is in their first MCE production. They are VERY queer, a singer with *OneVoice Mixed Chorus,* and Artistic Director for some unbelievably cool middle schoolers in ISD 191.

BEN PREMACK (*Ensemble*) is excited to be sharing the stage with such a talented cast. "Thank you for supporting local theatre, and enjoy the show!"

HEATHER RIECK (*Mrs. Davis*) is grateful for the chance to be part of this talented company and hopes you have a wonderful time at the show.

BRI SALHUS (*Ms. Marquez*) is excited to return to the MCE stage after previous productions. They are grateful for the opportunity to perform alongside such a talented company once again.

LOGAN SCHUMACHER (*Support Group*) is thrilled to return to the MCE stage after playing Edna in last year's production of *Hairspray*. He'd like to thank the whole cast and crew for making this another wonderful summer, and his family, friends and coworkers for their support.

MILES SCROGGINS (*Ensemble*) is happy to be in his second production of *RENT* in the Twin Cities. Past favorite roles include *Mary Rose* (Harry) and *Othello the Remix* (Cassio). He graduated from South High School Class of 2013.

BRITTANY SQUILLACE (*Maureen Johnson*) is thrilled to make her MCE debut with such an incredible cast, crew, pit and production team to bring to life one of her favorite shows. Fun fact, she played Joanne in *RENT* back in 2023. "It's interesting to tell the same story from a different perspective. Enjoy!"

JAD STANFIELD (*The Man, u/s Tom Collins*) is excited to be performing in *RENT* and thanks their friends, family, and the entire production team for their support.

TYSON STOCK (*Ensemble*) is thrilled to be back on the musical stage after a seventeen-year hiatus! This is his first MCE show. He'd like to thank his partner, Emma, for putting up with even more singing than usual.

VAL SULLIVAN (*Ensemble, u/s Joann Jefferson*) is delighted to be joining MCE. They'd like to thank their family and friends for all of their support.

SYDNEY SUMMERS *(Support Group/Coat Vendor)* is thrilled to be making her MCE debut in the musical closest to her heart. Favorite credits include: *Grease* (SOAR), *Next to Normal* (Whittier College) and *Kiss Me Kate* (FoG). An avid musician, award-winning costumer and impassioned teacher; she also enjoys dressing her small dog in tiny sweaters.

GRACE TATLEY (*Support Group*) is excited to return to the stage with MCE! Her most recent performances have been in aerial arts and she is a special education teacher in her spare time. Special thanks to her chosen family for their encouragement and support.

ROSEMARY VEGA (*Ensemble, u/s Mimi Marquez*) is so excited to be in *RENT*. This is her second MCE show, her first was *Legally Blonde* (Serena). Her last show was *West Side Story* (Maria). She does good by working as an Events Manager at Kendra Scott. ~ Spread love:) @larosemaryvega

BLAKE WIESLER *(Ensemble, u/s Mark)* is excited to be part of the MCE production of *RENT*. They'd like to thank everyone who helped bring this show to life.

WHO'S WHO IN THE PIT

ALEC EICHINGER (*Guitar 2*) is honored to play Guitar 2 for their debut show with MCE. Alec teaches middle school Orchestra in Maple Grove and loves playing music whenever and wherever they can. They live in Minneapolis with their spouse, Taylor, and their two cats, Link and Kirby.

MEGHAN ELIASON (*Conductor, Keyboard*) is a proud MPS parent and is thrilled to be back in the pit for her third MCE production (following *Bring It On* and *Hairspray*). She has been a *RENT* fan since the '90s and still cannot believe she gets to be part of this bucket list opportunity. Thanks to all involved with the show, and love to her supportive family and friends!

CHRIS MICHAELS (*Bass Guitar*) is thrilled to be in the pit for his third MCE production. He'd like to thank his partner Katie and daughter Marigold for their love, support, and encouragement, which made this possible.

SEAN RAESIDE (*Drummer*) is thrilled to perform in *RENT* and is thankful for the friendships and memories made throughout the rehearsal process.

IAN ROBINSON (*Guitarist*) is delighted to be in his first MCE production! His previous shows include *A Year With Frog and Toad* (MPP) and *Godspell* (BHS). He's extra thankful to his wife for her support, and wishes their dogs could see the show.

SAM VINITSKY (*Keyboard 2)* is grateful for the opportunity to be part of this production and hopes you enjoy the show.

MARTHA MATHEWSON (*Keyboard 2*) is the resident pianist and organist at Our Lady of Peace Catholic Community, has led the pit for Wayzata High School musicals, and is a part of a local quartet, From the Heart.

WHO'S WHO IN THE TECH CREW

APRIL FLECK (*Costumer*) is delighted to be working on the costume crew with her daughter. She recently assisted with SWHS's production of *Shrek*.

GABRIELLE JOHNSON (*Music Assistant*) is so excited to be a part of the *RENT* team. She has recently been apart of productions such as *Plano at Third Space* (Production Assistant) and *Cinderella* (Stage Manager). She feels so honored to work with such a great crew. She wants to thank her family and her friends for always supporting her, the production team for giving her this opportunity, and she hopes you enjoy the show.

AARON KOPPE (*Assistant Stage Manager)* is so excited to come back again! They are so grateful for the cast and crew!

ASHLEY KUEHL (*Tech Crew*) is happy to be participating in their first MCE production.

STEPHANIE OLSEN (*Costumer*) is excited to join the MCE team for the first time! She is an avid musical theatergoer and is honored to be a part of this production while learning under such a talented team.

ISE OKHIRIA (*Tech Crew*) is excited to join their first MCE production. They are grateful to be a part of the amazing show that the cast, crew, and production team have put so much work into. They are a software engineer who enjoys theater.

MARLIN PETERSON (*Tech Crew*) has worked tech on shows from *The Addams Family* to *Death of a Salesman*. He was once the sole tech crew member for a show in a state prison. In his spare time, he reads, contemplates quantum entanglement and watches movies. His favorite food is breakfast.

OLY PUFF *(Projections)* is a notorious maker of things, specializing in video and object design. An MCAD alum, Oly is excited to bring Mark's vision to Minneapolis in this production. When not behind a computer, they can be found cooking or biking by the river. IG: @olypuffmakes-stuff | Twitch: Twitch.tv/PuffTheMagicVj

ERICA PRONSCHINSKE *(Tech Crew)* is excited to be helping with her first production with MCE and learning more about the behind-the-scenes work that brings a show to life. In her free time, she likes to stay active and pick up different hobbies.

ELLIE ROSE (*Lighting Tech*) recently moved to Minnesota from Maine and is excited for their first show with MCE! Favorite past shows include *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Lighting Tech), *Fiddler on the Roof* (Ensemble) and *FUTURITY* (Actor). They love baking and walks along the lake with friends.

MARY THURY (*Costumer*) is thrilled to join MCE for her first production. Mary brings experience assisting school and community theatre through backstage coordination and pre-production. She is energized and inspired by the cast and crew's creativity and dedication and hopes you enjoy the performance!

IAN VOGT (*Tech Crew*) is excited to be part of his third MCE summer musical. He has also helped with a number of musicals and plays at Southwest High School, including *Into the Woods* and *Mamma Mia!*. Ian always has a backpack full of potentially useful items—50-foot extension cord, projector, speaker? Check!

ERIKA WAXDAHL *(Assistant Stage Manager)* is so thrilled to be back again! They are so grateful to be a part of it all.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Assistant Stage Managers.....Aaron Koppe, Erika Waxdahl
Costume Crew.....April Fleck, Sylvia Fleck, Aleah Hayes, JoEllyn Jolstad Pepper Lacey, Betsy C. Lemal, Stephanie Olsen, Anna Robertson, Nao Sabelko-Watson, Mary Thury
Scenic Crew.....Cassandra Brink, Gigi Fierro, Elizabeth Koetz, Ashley Kuehl, Erica Pronschinske, Ellie Rose, Chad Scharnberg, Sofia Tsongtaatarii, Ian Vogt
Lighting Crew.....William Castle, Gigi Fierro, David Harty, Ise Okhiria, Scar O'Malia Marlin Peterson, Chad Scharnberg, Nick Shircel, Sofia Tsongtaatarii, Ian Vogt
Spotlight Operators.....Marlin Peterson, Evan Bennet
Projections.....Oly Puff
Projection Operator.....Sofia Tsongtaatarii
Sound Engineer.....Dave Premack
Sound Cues.....Nick Shircel
Sound Crew.....Nick Shircel, Ian Vogt
Playbill Design.....Emily Selchow

MINNEAPOLIS COMMUNITY ED STAFF

Southwest Associate Educator.....Kathryn Waller
Graphic Artist.....Marin Devine
Marketing Specialist.....Larissa Johnson
Program Specialist.....Andrew Gramm
Youth & Adult Manager.....Steve Alexander
Executive Director.....Aviva Hillenbrand

SYNOPSIS

Set in the East Village of New York City, Rent is about falling in love, finding your voice and living for today. Winner of the Tony Award for Best Musical and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, RENT has become a pop-cultural phenomenon with songs that rock and a story that resonates with audiences of all ages.

Based loosely on Puccini's La Bohème, Jonathan Larson's Rent follows a year in the life of a group of impoverished young artists and musicians struggling to survive and create in New York's Lower East Side, under the shadow of HIV/AIDS. The physical and emotional complications of the disease pervade the lives of Roger, Mimi, Tom and Angel. Maureen deals with her chronic infidelity through performance art; her partner, Joanne, wonders if their relationship is worth the trouble. Benny has sold out his Bohemian ideals in exchange for a hefty income and is on the outs with his former friends. Mark, an aspiring filmmaker, feels like an outsider to life in general. How these young bohemians negotiate their dreams, loves and conflicts provides the narrative thread to this groundbreaking musical.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

It's kind of an incredible story: On February 1st, 1896, Puccini's opera La Bohème premiered in Turin, Italy, telling the story of a poor Parisian seamstress dying of tuberculosis and her ragtag group of bohemian artist friends and lovers. Almost exactly a century later, on January 25, 1996, in New York City, Jonathan Larson, an artist who had seen the deaths of many of his own friends from AIDS, died suddenly of an aortic dissection the night before his third and final musical, based loosely on Puccini's opera, opened its Off-Broadway preview performances. RENT officially opened on Broadway on April 29, 1996, at the Nederlander Theatre and ran on Broadway for 12 years.

There is something about RENT that feels like it was written in the stars - maybe it's Larson's untimely death or the cyclical nature of the story - whatever it is, this show is beloved for so many reasons: the music bangs, it's an anticapitalist masterpiece, and we see ourselves in these characters and the struggles and losses they experience.

As history tends to repeat itself, there are many uncanny parallels between early 19th-century Paris, late 20th-century New York and 2026 Minneapolis. Over-armed and undertrained police forces targeting the poorest and least white communities. A devestating and widely misunderstood disease wiping out queer, BIPOC, and transient populations. Wild wealth disparity leading to overwhelming economic strain and rising homelessness. Sounds familiar, right? And yet, in all of that, the characters in La Bohème, the characters in RENT, and the very real people who are putting on this production and/or reading this director's note find joy and solace in their artistic endeavors, their dreams of the future, and their friends and neighbors.* I encourage you to find yourself in each and every one of these characters and let their stories of perseverance and liberation inspire you to lead your life with your community in mind. The opposite of war isn't peace, it's creation.

*In an effort to walk the values of the show we're putting on, we have invited a variety of local and national organizations to be in our lobby before, during and after the show. Please stop by and learn more about their work and support if you are able. Many of our neighbors still can't pay their rent; AIDS still kills roughly 600,000 people yearly around the world; and anti-trans legislation will lead to the death of so many of our trans brothers and sisters. *~Natalie Dulka*

Summer Theatre with Minneapolis Community Education exists to integrate multi-generational educational theatre to the community. We strive to create a high quality, pre-professional theatre experience for youth and adult actors, singers, dancers, designers, technicians, musicians and of course audiences. We thank you for attending this performance.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Written by Jonathan Larson, RENT premiered at the New York Theatre Workshop in 1996 before transferring to Broadway, where it became one of the longest-running musicals in Broadway history with more than 5,100 performances. Inspired by La Bohème, the groundbreaking rock musical redefined modern musical theater by telling the story of young artists in New York City's East Village during the HIV/AIDS crisis. Tragically, Larson died unexpectedly the night before the show's first public preview, never seeing its enormous success. RENT went on to win the 1996 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, the Tony Award for Best Musical, and three additional Tony Awards, earning widespread praise for its contemporary score, diverse cast, and powerful themes of love, community, and living life to the fullest. Its enduring message of "No day but today" has made RENT one of the most influential and beloved musicals of the modern era.

SPECIAL THANKS

Southwest Community Education; The Costume Collective; Project Success; South High School and Southwest High School's Performing Arts faculty and staff, administration and engineers; Southwest Performing Arts Council; Anwatin Middle School; Emma Fischer; Chad Carr & MPS Grounds Dept; Zach Christensen; Eddie Lee, Danté JL Murray; Keira Kowal-Jett; All our usher and ticket-selling volunteers. The entire company extends their deepest appreciation to our families and friends for their support!

ENJOY THE SHOW!

TRIBUTE

The following are names of loved ones who have been lost to HIV/AIDS, Covid, suicide, gun violence, police brutality, hate crimes and other failures of the system. Actors in the Support Group will choose a name from this list each night.

Aiden, Brook Rodney Johnson, Curlee Mabin, Danielle Grimsley, David Girdaukus, Douglas Lincoln, Ella Major, Jamie Mashek, Jason, Jim Dempsey, Joe Alexander Vargo, John Finken, Jon Will, Kane Anderson, Laura Gillett, Lauren, Layne, Liz, Madam Cleo Laine, Madi Ewers, Michael CD Kelly, Pat Girdaukus, Perry Ferguson, Prvt. Andrew C. Wilfahrt, Randy Newberry, Rosie Francis, Thompson Lange, Tony.

Join Community Education this summer as musical theatre takes center stage!

Jul 10–19, Evening & Matinee

Intergenerational production at South High School

Jul 30, 6:00 pm

Elementary production at Kenwood Elementary School

Aug 6, 10:30 am

Elementary production at Sanford Middle School

Aug 4, 6 pm & Aug 5, 2:30 pm

All school-age production at Edison High School

Aug 5 & 6, 6:30 pm

Middle & High production at Barton Elementary School

Aug 6 & 7, 6:00 pm

All school-age production at North High School

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE DOOR.

Presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.mtishows.com

Look for our Fall 2026 catalog in your mailbox in August!

Registration opens **Wednesday, Sept. 2 at 9 am**

mplscommunityed.com

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The buildings that make up the Minneapolis Public Schools community are built within the traditional homelands of the Dakota people. Minnesota comes from the Dakota name for this region, Mni Sota Makoce translating to the land where the waters reflect the skies or cloudy waters. Minneapolis Public Schools recognizes the original peoples of this place and are committed to make ongoing efforts to educate the community about the relationship that Dakota people have to this area, both historically and today as they remain here in their home.